



## Responding to a Deployment - Let's be Professional

by Jeffrey Lamb

Firefighter/EMT

Sacramento County A.R.E.S. AEC

Call sign: KE6FF

All of us know that it is only a matter of time before a large scale emergency or disaster will happen. When a large scale emergency or disaster happens, normal communications can be overwhelmed, damaged, or destroyed. When this happens, our communities and those around us will likely request the well trained volunteers of A.R.E.S and or R.A.C.E.S to respond.

We are called “amateur” radio operators. This is because we are not paid. We volunteer. However, this is where the word “amateur” needs to end. Before we are ever called to deploy and help, we need to be throughly PROFESSIONAL. This means that before we are ever called to help, we need to be highly knowledgeable and proficient in our thinking, radio, and communication skills. On the scene of an emergency or disaster is NOT the place to learn the basics. Those who are not well trained and proficient should never be sent out. If an A.R.E.S or R.A.C.E.S volunteer arrives and is not well prepared and helpful, they will be quickly viewed as in the way and worthless and will likely be told to leave. The emergency personnel on scene have enough to deal with already without having someone who doesn't know what they are doing, and causing them more problems.

When an A.R.E.S or R.A.C.E.S volunteer is deployed, they need to wear appropriate clothing and footwear. You are not going on vacation, or shopping, or a day at the beach. You are going to an emergency or disaster scene. Wear appropriate clothing and shoes. If you do not know what appropriate clothing and shoes for an emergency is, ask your A.E.C or E.C. Remember to take your “go kit” and the things you have prepared to take for such an event. A professional knows what they will need and has it ready and brings it with them to get the job done right.

As you leave the house on your way to where you are being deployed, remember to leave any EGO you may have at home! If you want the glory, and to be on TV, and have your picture in the paper..... stay home..... we don't need people like that.... and neither do the emergency service workers that are there on scene.

When you arrive at the location you were deployed to, it is time to kick the professionalism into high gear. Be confident yet humble. Introduce yourself. Locate the person you are to report to, be polite in asking. When you find the person you are to report to, politely introduce yourself, advise that you are with A.R.E.S and or R.A.C.E.S, and that you were deployed there to provide communications and to be of assistance to them. You might be told that they do not need you. If this happens, do not argue or protest. Contact and advise your resource net control operator and wait for instructions.

When you arrive at the deployed location and introduce yourself, they may put you right to work. **YOU MUST EARN THE RESPECT OF EMERGENCY SERVICE WORKERS, YOU WILL NOT GET IT AUTOMATICALLY!!!** Everyone where you are deployed will be far less than impressed if you show up wearing a badge and trying to look like you are something important. The emergency service workers will quickly figure out if you are a professional or not. Remember, you are there to HELP. You are NOT in charge. You have NO right to be there. You have NO authority. You are there to help THEM, they are NOT there to do what YOU think should be done. If they ask you, offer your best advice. If they don't ask, don't offer advice. If these folks see you are a well trained communications operator and professional, you will quickly earn their respect and you will be treated as part of the team and a highly valued resource.

When the assignment is done where you were deployed to, check in with the person you reported to or that is currently in charge at that location. Let them know you very much appreciated them letting you help out. Contact your resource net control operator and advise that your assignment at your current location is ending and ask for instructions.

A.R.E.S and or R.A.C.E.S members or groups will NOT be asked to respond again if they prove to be less than trained. Those who whine, gripe, and complain will also NOT be invited back. Be the well trained, humble, professional! For the volunteer, success is it's own reward. Impress with your professional attitude and training, and you and your A.R.E.S / R.A.C.E.S group will always be gratefully invited to help. 73